
Accommodation complaints procedure

Date: September 2021



Policy Cover Sheet

Name of Policy:	Accommodation complaints procedure
Purpose of Policy:	This document sets out the formal procedure to be followed in the event of a service not being delivered in line with our high standards and user aspirations.
Intended Recipients:	All students that apply for and take up accommodation through Staffordshire University Accommodation Office
Approval for this policy given by:	Ian Munton
Date of Approval:	1.9.2021
Proposed Review Date:	1.9.22
Responsible for review:	Head of Residential Services and Accommodation Officer
Name of person completing this coversheet	Deborah Healy
Classification category of this policy:	Accommodation Complaints

Student Accommodation Complaints and Escalation Procedure

Introduction

The complaints procedure aims to:

- be easily accessible
- resolve complaints informally at local level wherever possible
- encourage prompt review and decision making, with established time frames for action
- ensure a full and fair investigation
- respect complainants' desire for confidentiality wherever possible
- provide an effective response and appropriate redress
- feed back into University systems to ensure that services are improved

Our Service

We strive to provide an excellent service in terms of quality of work, timely delivery, professional behaviour and customer service. We expect consistently high standards from our staff and our contractors. We recognise, however, that there are occasions when the services delivered by Staffordshire University Accommodation may fall short of reasonable expectations.

This document sets out the formal procedure to be followed in the event of a service not being delivered in line with our high standards and user aspirations. If you are unhappy about a service provided by or through Staffordshire University Accommodation, or if we have not done something which we promised to do, the best way for us to make improvements is to hear from you and learn from what you have to say; we value your opinions.

We also aspire to hold staff accountable for the services that they manage and so request that complaints are not initially escalated to senior leadership.

Definition of a complaint

For the purposes of this procedure a complaint is defined as any serious and formal expression of dissatisfaction that requires action or redress. It includes repetitive failure to resolve or address a reported issue; serious failure of agreed service arrangement; serious breach of licence agreement; serious inconvenience caused as a result of Staffordshire University Accommodation's actions (or inaction) and inappropriate behaviour by a member of Staffordshire University Accommodation staff or contractors.

The process

If you wish to make a complaint about your experience within Staffordshire University Accommodation, you should first try to resolve the matter informally in consultation with either the person who has caused the complaint or a member of Residence Life staff as appropriate. At this stage, complaints logged in writing will be acknowledged within three working days and responded to fully within seven working days.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally you should log the details of the matter in writing on the Room Service portal including, if you wish, the form of remedy which may be sought. The complaint will then revert to a senior member of staff.

For a formal complaint to be considered, these details must be logged no later than one calendar month after the date in which the incident has occurred. If the complaint is received after this time the senior staff member will exercise discretion as to whether the matter in question is to be investigated.

The outcome of your complaint will be issued to you in writing within 21 working days. Such notification will include details of Staffordshire University's Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome; <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/policies/complaints-appealsprocedure.jsp#formalcomplaints>

The 21-day time limit for lodging a formal complaint under the Staffordshire University Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure will start from the date you are notified of the outcome of your complaint under the procedure above. At all times during the processing of your complaint informal resolution is encouraged and students may wish to seek the advice from Staffordshire University Students' Union Advice Centre;

[Students' Union Student Advice Centre](#)

Compensation claims

In any service provision, there are times when problems arise that have an impact on the users of the service. When users experience interruption of service or a change in quality they may have an expectation of some form of compensation. The rules governing compensation payments need definition to achieve fairness. Staffordshire University Accommodation is a self-financing department, the income for which comprises student accommodation fees (term time and those who stay in the summer) and fees from commercial visitors in vacations. For budgets to balance, compensation payments either result in increased fees or reduced services. Therefore, any payments must be justified and fair.

- Building works and maintenance

It is not always possible to schedule building works and maintenance works when buildings are unoccupied. Such works, unless emergencies will be scheduled for working hours (normally 08:30 to 17:30). Residents will be given advanced notice of such works. No compensation will be paid for noise resulting from such works or for changes resulting from such works, in facilities provided.

Target response and rectification periods

Priority	Response time	Rectification target	Out of hours
1	20 minutes from notification	Within 24 hours	No
1	30 minutes from notification	Within 24 hours	Yes
2	Within 3 hours	Within 72 hours	No
3	Within 48 hours	Within 14 days	No

Priority definitions

Priority 1	A maintenance fault posing threat to the health, safety and security of individuals or of damage to property.
Priority 2	Loss of a key service such as heating, hot water and sanitation
Priority 3	Routine repairs to fabric of the building

Priority 1: Emergency

	Response Time
Make Safe	2 Hours
Temporary Repair	24 Hours
Permanent Repair	2 Days

Priority 2: Urgent

	Response Time
Make Safe	24 Hours
Temporary Repair	48 Hours
Permanent Repair	2 Days

Priority 3: Breakdown Reactive

	Response Time
Permanent Repair	7 Days

Priority 4: Other Reactive (Shelves, noticeboards etc)

	Response Time
Completion	28 Days

Priority 5: Other works

	Response Time
Provide Quote to Customer	10 Days
Customer to Approve Quote	15 Days
Carry out Works	40 Days

- Lack of services resulting from failure of service providers outside Staffordshire University

If a service provider external to Staffordshire University is responsible for the provision of a service and it fails, Staffordshire University will take reasonable steps to inform residents of the duration of the failure, inform residents of any alternative provision and will take reasonable steps to require the provider to reinstate the service without delay, including where appropriate seeking compensation from the service provider for the failure.

- Lack of services resulting from a failure of provision by Staffordshire University

Where the service failure arises from action or inaction by Staffordshire University, compensation payments will be considered in following an assessment of the inconvenience caused, taking account of the difference between essential and nonessential amenities. A senior team member shall be responsible for determining the amount of compensation to be paid. Compensation will not be paid where a satisfactory alternative provision has been provided. Compensation will not be paid until a period of 48 hours has elapsed without correction of the fault.

- Failure to report faults and vandalism

Compensation will not be paid for a lack of service or amenity where the individual(s) affected are aware of but have failed to report as soon as reasonably possible, in writing, a fault to the Residence Life team. Compensation will not be paid where a fault or interruption of service has been caused by acts of vandalism.

- Major disaster

In the event of catastrophic failure of services or the destruction of part of a building necessitating closure, all reasonable steps will be taken to re-house students. Where re-housing is accepted by a student, they will bear the cost of the new housing. Accommodation fees will only be payable up to the point of closure and one week's fees will be returned as compensation.

- Claims

A claim for compensation must be made via the Room Service Portal within 21 days of the event causing the claim. A response to the claim will normally be made within 21 days of receipt of the claim.

☐ Appeals

Appeals can be made as set out in the Complaints and Appeals Procedure. The grounds for such appeal will be: 1. The amount of the compensation offered is unreasonably low. 2. Compensation payment was unreasonably refused. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 21 days of the date upon which the decision on compensation was communicated to the claimant.

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